

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 03023 052247Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /052 W
-----030198 052253Z /65

O R 052130Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8151
INFO AMEMBASSY LAPAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 3023

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ELECTORAL SITUATION BRIGHTENS DESPITE HUERTA PROBLEM

REF: QUITO 2979

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FRANCISCO HUERTA MONTALVO'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY SEEMS TO BE DEAD FOLLOWING A MAY 4 SUPREME COURT DECISION AND DIM PROSPECTS THAT HE CAN OVERCOME THE GROUNDS OF HIS INELIGIBILITY BY BREAKING HIS LEGAL TIES WITH FEDESARROLLO. HIS RUNNING MATE HAS ADOPTED A CONCILIATORY MOOD TOWARD A SUBSTITUTE CANDIDATE. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (SET) RELENDED IN APPLYING REGULATIONS WHICH THREATENED THE CANDIDACIES OF OSVALDO HURTADO, ABDON CALDERON, AND CAMILO MENA, THE FIRST TWO OF WHOM SEEM LIKELY TO QUALIFY AS A RESULT. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT DESPITE GOE MANEUVERING ON HUERTA NOMINATION, HIS FAILURE CAN ULTIMATELY BE ATTRIBUTED TO SUBSTANTIVE REASONS FOR HIS DISQUALIFICATION STEMMING FROM HIS CONTINUING ASSOCIATION WITH FEDESARROLLO. THE CHANGE IN SET RULES INDICATES A HEALTHIER GOE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, AND MAKES LIKELY A MORE OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTION. USG EFFORTS MAY HAVE HAD, AND WILL CONTINUE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 03023 052247Z

TO HAVE A KEY ROLE IN THIS PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

2. AS EXPECTED, ON MAY 5 THE SUPREME COURT UPHELD THE EARLIER DISQUALIFICATION BY THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL OF THE LIBERAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, FRANCISCO HUERTA. THE COURT HELD THAT THE TRIBUNAL HAD ACTED PROPERLY IN NOT ALLOWING THE LIBERALS TO WITHDRAW THEIR INSCRIPTION OF CANDIDATES

AND IN DISQUALIFYING HUERTA BECAUSE HE REPRESENTED FEDESARROLLO, WHICH HAD A CONTRACT WITH THE GOE, AT THE TIME OF HIS FILING.

3. HUERTA STILL HAS A THEORETICAL CHANCE TO QUALIFY IF HE IS ABLE TO BREAK HIS LEGAL CONNECTION WITH FEDESARROLLO AND APPLY FOR FILING A SECOND TIME WITHOUT THAT ENCUMBRANCE. HOWEVER, THIS SEEMS TO BE CHIMERICAL. A FEDESARROLLO BOARD MEETING IN GUAYAQUIL WAS CALLED ON MAY 3 TO CONSIDER THE RESIGNATION AND THOUGH FIVE QUITO-BASED BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDED, THE GUAYAQUIL CONTINGENT DID NOT APPEAR, PREVENTING A QUORUM. ANOTHER MEETING WAS TO HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED ON MAY 5. POLCOUNS WAS TOLD BY HUERTA MONTALVO'S RUNNING MATE BLASCO PENAHERREIRA ON THE MORNING OF MAY 5 THAT THE ABSENCE OF THE GUAYAQUIL MEMBERS THE OTHER DAY INDICATED THE EXISTENCE OF A BACKSTAGE MANEUVER BY SUPPORTERS OF RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA RENDON OR OTHER CANDIDATES TO BLOCK HUERTA MONTALVO'S LAST RECOURSE AND THAT THIS SITUATION WAS NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE. PENAHERREIRA ADMITTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOE HAD ATTEMPTED TO MANIPULATE THE PROCESS TO IMPOSE HUERTA RENDON, HUERTA MONTALVO'S PROBLEM AT THE MOMENT WENT BEYOND THE GOE'S ABILITY TO RIG THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL OR SUPREME COURT. IT WAS DIRTY POLITICS, HE SAID, BUT HAD MORE TO DO WITH CIVILIAN DECISIONS THAN WITH A GOE-INSPIRED CONSPIRACY. HUERTA MONTALVO WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND INELIGIBLE EVEN IF THE GALO PLAZA-LED SET HAD BEEN ABLE TO CONSIDER THE CASE. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 03023 052247Z

4. PENAHERREIRA SAID THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY SUPREME COUNCIL WOULD BE MEETING THE NIGHT OF MAY 5 TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION AND WILL BE PRESSED TO MAKE A DECISION ON THE PARTY'S NOMINEE. ALTHOUGH, HE NOTED, HUERTA MONTALVO HAD STILL BEEN IN A FIGHTING MOOD THE NIGHT BEFORE, PENAHERREIRA WAS INCLINED AT THIS POINT TO BE CONCILIATORY IN VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES. PENAHERREIRA SAID HE STILL HAD SOME DOUBTS WHETHER HUERTA RENDON WOULD DECIDE TO RUN IN A HIGHLY CONTESTED ELECTION, WHICH MAY BE THE CASE IN VIEW OF THE SET'S DECISION REGARDING THE OTHER CANDIDACIES (SEE BELOW). HOWEVER, IF HE DID, THE LIBERAL PARTY WOULD HAVE TO PUT THE BEST FACE ON HIS CANDIDACY. THIS MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DO, HE OBSERVED, IN VIEW OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SO-CALLED NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT CONTAINING A NUMBER OF OBNOXIOUS POLITICAL ELEMENTS, THE KNOWLEDGE OF HUERTA RENDON'S CONTACTS WITH THE GOE, AND THE STRONG STATEMENTS THAT BOTH HE AND HUERTA MONTALVO HAD MADE DURING THE PAST WEEK ABOUT THE IMPOSITION OF AN ECUADOREAN BORDABERRY. HOWEVER, HE CONCLUDED THAT A WAY MUST BE FOUND FOR THE GOOD OF THE PARTY AND OF THE COUNTRY, AND THAT HUERTA MONTALVO'S ATTITUDE WOULD BE CRUCIAL.

5. IN A COMPLETE REVERSE OF ITS PREVIOUS POSITION THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL ANNOUNCED ON MAY 5 THAT IT WAS REFORMING ITS INTERNAL PROCEDURES TO REMOVE THE MONOR REQUIREMENTS THAT HAD BEEN STUMBLING BLOCKS IN THE QUALIFICATION OF THE POPULAR DEMOCRACY PARTY (DP), THE NATIONAL ALFARIST FRONT (FRA) AND THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MPD) (ALTHOUGH THE MPD MAY NOT COME UP WITH ENOUGH SIGNATURES EVEN UNDER THE RELAXED RULES). THE TRIBUNAL PROMISED ITS FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOGNITION OF THOSE GROUPS TODAY AND THE NEW PROCEDURAL RULES MAKE THEIR LEGAL INSCRIPTION LIKELY. THE NEW RULES GIVE NEW LIFE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES OF ABDON CALDERON, CAMILO MENA, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY OSVALDO HURTADO, VICE PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 QUITO 03023 052247Z

NOMINEE OF THE DP-CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES COALITION.

6. COMMENT: THE BACKTRACKING ON THE RECOGNITION OF THE PARTIES IN THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL STRONGLY INDICATES THAT THE GOE REALIZED THAT IT HAD GONE TOO FAR IN THE MANIPULATION OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND HAS DECIDED TO PLACATE ITS CRITICS. THE STRONG REACTION FROM MEDIA AND POLITICAL SECTORS INTERNALLY AND THE EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BY THE USG BOTH HERE AND WASHINGTON SEEM TO HAVE HAD AN EFFECT.

7. THE ELECTORAL CONTEST AND THE RETURN PROCESS SEEM TO BE GETTING BACK ON THE TRACK AS A RESULT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS. OF THE SEVEN ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES, ONLY HUERTA MONTALVO SEEMS LIKELY AT THIS POINT TO BE ELIMINATED. AND ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A GOE CONSPIRACY TO REPLACE HIM WITH HIS UNCLE, THE GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED MANEUVER SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SUPERFLUOUS IN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL HARD BALL THAT HIS CIVILIAN RIVALS CHOSE TO PLAY. THE GOE EFFORTS, IRONICALLY, MAY HAVE ACTUALLY HURT HUERTA RENDON'S CANDIDACY, RATHER THAN HELPED IT.

8. WITH REGARD TO PENAHERRERA'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE NEED TO PUT THE BEST FACE ON HUERTA RENDON'S POTENTIAL CANDIDACY, PENAHERRERA MAY NOT HAVE BEEN UNMINDFUL THAT IN ADDITION TO ACQUIESCENCE BY HUERTA MONTALVO THE BEST WAY MIGHT BE TO RETAIN PENAHERRERA AS VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE. THIS WOULD INDICATE THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY, NOT OUTSIDE ELEMENTS, WAS IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.
CORR

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION LAW, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978QUITO03023
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780193-0088
Format: TEL
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780588/aaaacxme.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5c763aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 QUITO 2979
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2777341
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELECTORAL SITUATION BRIGHTENS DESPITE HUERTA PROBLEM
TAGS: PINT, EC, (HUERTA MONTALVO, FRANCISCO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5c763aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014